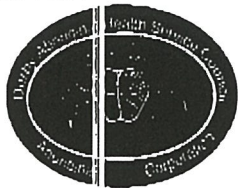


**DERBY ABORIGINAL HEALTH
SERVICE COUNCIL
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION**



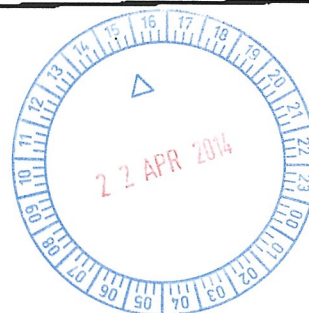
ICN: 3027

ABN 57 511 340 580

**1 Stanley Street
PO. Box 1155
Derby WA 6728**

**Phone: (08) 9193 1090
Fax: (08) 9193 1903**

22 April 2014



Committee regarding Inquiry into the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme

Dear Committee Members

I write in order to submit my experience and opinions regarding the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme. I am a GP working at the Derby Aboriginal Health Service. As you know, many of the services our patients need are only supplied in Perth. While it is reasonable to utilize this model in a State in which regional settlements aren't large, the PATS scheme needs to be organized in such a way as to reflect this model. If diagnostic mammograms, bone densitometry, endocrinologists and MRI can only be accessed by a trip to Perth, the system must enable our patients to travel to Perth. This should not be done begrudgingly.

The difficulty I have experienced in recent times is that PATS will not pay for an escort to travel with the patient unless there is a written submission by the GP to the PATS officer supplying a medical justification. So, instead of filling out a form, the GP now needs to fill out a form and write a letter, justifying the request for an escort. For many of our patients from remote areas, a trip to Broome is a major excursion. For these patients the idea of travelling to Perth unaccompanied is quite frightening. Not only does the patient need to travel to Perth, he/she also needs to get to appointments in various parts of the city. This is daunting for a person from the bush. In addition, this person is often unwell which complicates the travel process. I feel that there should be special consideration to patients travelling to Perth from remote areas.

Some of our patients need to travel 300km or more to get to our service. They would have a remote clinic which is closer, but our doctors only visit those clinics once a month. If a person needs assessment or treatment more urgently, and it needs to be delivered by a

doctor, these patients need to travel. These patients are travelling significant distances to see a primary health doctor, and that needs to be remembered. Patients do not only travel to get to tertiary services.

Thank you for your time.

Dr Susannah Warwick